

METHOD OF SELECTING GROUT COLOR AND RELATED SELECTION CARDS

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

5 The present invention relates to an improved method and associated color comparison cards for use in facilitating simultaneous viewing of tile color and appearance with grout color candidates to thereby present more of a realistic, readily observable comparison than previously known.

2. Description of the Prior Art

10 As employed herein the term "tile" means individual building units which are structured to be assembled in arrays with grout therebetween to establish floors, walls, ceilings, decorative panels and may be composed of any suitable material such as ceramic, synthetic resins, rubber, stone or other preformed materials. It has been known in both residential and commercial construction to provide an array of tiles with grout therebetween in floors, walls, ceilings, decorative panels and other uses. In such arrangements the individual tiles are positioned as part of the array with grout being provided therebetween such that upon setting of the grout, the grout serves to secure the tile elements in the desired position and to provide a seal therebetween. In 15 some instances, tiles may be square or rectangular with a first line of grout being oriented generally perpendicular to a second line. In other instances, tiles may be positioned angularly so that a first line of grout will have an angular position other than perpendicular with respect to the other. In yet other situations, as in stones, for example, for use in fireplace construction, 20 irregular patterns of grout are employed.

25 For aesthetic purposes, it is desirable that the color of the grout be at minimum compatible with and, preferably, enhance the appearance of the overall construction by having an attractive combination with the tile color or colors.

In general, one selecting grout colors typically would attempt to position a color sample representing a possible grout color against a tile color and attempt to envision what the appearance of the final assembly would be.

5 There remains, therefore, a need for improved means for permitting a more accurate comparison of grout colors with tile color so that better judgment in grout and tile selection may be provided.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

10 The present invention provides in one embodiment a method of selecting a grout color which includes providing at least one partially transparent card having a first color band representative of a possible grout color and placing the card over an array of tiles with the first color band generally overlying the grout or grout area and thereby permitting visual comparison of the first color band with the tile to facilitate selection of the grout color. A second color band may be employed to permit simultaneous 15 viewing of intersecting grout colors against the tile with viewing of the tile color being permitted through the cards.

20 The cards may be provided with identifying indicia such as words, numbers, alphanumeric designations or other means for precisely identifying the color above and beyond the color band appearance. The cards, preferably, through transparency of material permit side by side viewing of a potential grout color with an underlying tile color.

25 It is an object of the present invention to provide a method and cards employable in the method for facilitating visual comparison of a variety of potential grout colors adjacent to underlying tile colors or patterns.

It is an object of the present invention to provide a simple and efficient means for permitting a realistic, direct comparison between possible grout colors and tile colors through the use of unique card members.

30 It is yet another object of the present invention to facilitate sequential comparisons of a number of potential grout colors in combination with tile colors.

It is yet another object of the present invention to provide an inexpensive and efficient method and associated cards for use in the method in effecting aesthetic compatibility comparisons between grouts and tile.

5 These and other objects of the invention will be more fully understood from the following detailed description of the invention on reference to the illustrations appended hereto.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 is a top plan view of an array of tiles with grout therebetween.

10 Figure 2 is a top plan view of a form of grout color selecting card employable in the present invention.

Figure 3 is a top plan view of a card of the present invention overlying an array of tiles.

Figure 4 is an elevational view of a card of the present invention.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

15 While, for convenience of reference herein reference has been made to the "color" of a tile, it will be appreciated that the tile may include a plurality or blend of colors as well as smooth or irregular surface configurations as well as other visually perceptible characteristics.

20 Referring to Figure 1, there is shown an array of generally square tiles 2, 4, 6, 8. A first grout section 10 is interposed between tiles 2 and 4. A second grout section 12 is interposed between tiles 2 and 6. A third grout section 14 is interposed between tiles 6 and 8 and a fourth grout section 16 is interposed between tiles 4 and 8. It will be appreciated that one viewing this completed assembly will view the grout sections 10, 12, 14, 16 between the respective tiles 2, 4, 6, 8. The present invention facilitates more direct comparison of alternate grout colors in an approximation of how they will appear in the end use assembly such as shown in Figure 1.

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30 As shown in Figure 2, a card 30 is of generally rectangular configuration and has a length L which may be about 1 to 14 inches, a width W which may be about 1 to 14 inches, and a thickness of about 0.001 to $\frac{1}{4}$

inches. A first color band 32 is substantially coextensive with the card length L and has a width which approximates that of an underlying grout section such as 10, 12, 14, 16. This permits the first color band 32 to totally overlie and mask the grout underlying color and provide an indication of the appearance of the color band 32 were it selected. Similarly, a second color band 34 is substantially coextensive with the width W of the card 30 and has a width generally approximating that of a grout that would be interposed between a pair of adjacent tiles. The color bands 32, 34 preferably each have a width of about 1/32 to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch. The color bands 32, 34 on a given card are preferably of the same color.

The card 30 is preferably composed of a transparent material with at least a majority of the regions not covered by first color band 32 or second color band 34 being transparent, thereby permitting viewing of the tile color therethrough and facilitating side by side comparison of a possible grout color with the tile color.

In addition, color indicia such as the word "BLACK" 40 or a color designation number such as "NO. 123" 42 may be provided in order to establish precise identification of the particular grout colors.

In the form shown in Figure 2, the first color band 32 is offset from the second color band 34 by an angle A which is approximately 90 degrees. It will be appreciated that for other installations wherein relative angular positions of intersecting grout sectors may not be as shown in Figure 1, the angle A may, for example, be about 1 to 179 degrees.

Referring to Figures 3 and 4, it will be seen that the card 30 is in overlying position with respect to tiles 2, 4, 6, 8 with the tiles being visible therethrough except for the presence of first color band 32 and second color band 34 which mask the underlying grout sections 10, 12, 14, 16 and, thereby, permit viewing of the tile color through the transparent portions of card 30 in intermediate adjacency with respect to the possible grout color shown in first color band 32 and second color band 34. (The indicia 40, 42 are not illustrated in Figure 3.)

Figure 4 shows an elevational view of card 30 with the color band 34 being shown as partially within the upper surface 44 of card 30, although the functionality would be equivalent if color band 34 were applied to the surface 44 of card 30.

5 It will be appreciated that in use, a plurality of cards with each preferably containing first and second color bands of a given color will be provided so that one making a color selection can view various options before making a final decision.

10 It will be appreciated, therefore, that the method of the present invention provides an improved means for selecting grout colors in the context of particular tile color viewed either in sample arrays or actual structures by facilitating direct adjacent comparison of the options.

15 Whereas particular embodiments of the invention have been described herein for purposes of illustration, it will be apparent to those skilled in the art that numerous variations of the details may be made without departing from the invention as set forth in the appended claims.